

The most usual way of endowing the Church at this period was to establish a chantry or chapel, with priests specially attached to it to sing masses and say private prayers for the souls of deceased persons named in the bequest. Prayers for the dead were no new thing, but in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the foundation of monastic houses absorbed most fresh endowments. The monks then undertook to say masses for the souls of their benefactors, and parish priests used to be similarly employed. But the movement for the endowment of monasteries was now on the wane, and the Church authorities had interfered with this employment of parsons, on the ground that it caused them to neglect their parochial duties.<sup>1</sup> It thus became necessary to found special chantries and endow a separate class of priests for this purpose alone. All through the fourteenth century this new form of foundation grew apace, and after Wycliffe's day it increased rather than diminished. The chantries sometimes stood by themselves as separate colleges, sometimes they were inserted as chapels round the choir or in the walls of existing churches. These delicately carved relics of the last age of Catholicism may sometimes still be found adorning the ruder magnificence of a Norman or Early English cathedral, though shrines and chapels have disappeared wholesale in the stormy ages that loved Protestantism more than architecture. Besides the regular chantry priests, great numbers of needy clerics lived by obtaining occasional employment to pray for souls. Gentlemen and merchants bequeathed money in their wills to buy prayers for their own future welfare, and the pious made presents for the benefit of dead relations. Even if these practices were made general by a desire to accord with the fashion, they sprang—at least in many cases—from the genuine belief of the day that dead friends and parents could be released from torture by money so spent on their behalf.<sup>2</sup>

Pilgrimage had, no doubt, several different attractions, *i* We see it in Chaucer as a pleasant holiday excursion into the *i* neighbouring county for tradespeople and professional men. / The desire to travel afield and to see strange lands may well {

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, *i.* 549-50. <sup>2</sup> *O. of B.; Test. V&| Test. Ecor.; Memorials of Ripon, i. 153-96.*